

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: CONVESATION WITH DEP PRIMIN/FONMIN MUHAMMAD NU'MAN

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION; AHMAD MUHAMMAD NU'MAN ELECTED TO REPUBLICAN COUNCIL.

2. BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR ALGIERS' CONFERENCES DEP PRIMIN/FONMIN MUHAMMAD NU'MAN DISCUSSED WITH US HIS SOMEWHAT PARTISAN READING OF CURRENT UP-IN-THE-AIR INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION.

3. NU'MAN CONFIRMED WHAT WE HAD BEEN HEARING FROM ALL SIDES. PRESIDENT IRYANI WANTS FORMER PRIMIN MUHSIN AL-AYNI BACK. HOWEVER, HIS SEVERAL PLANS TO INSTALL AL-AYNI IN AN OPERATIONAL POSITION SUCH AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BLOCKED BY SAUDI VETO AND WIDESPREAD INTERNAL OPPOSITION FROM PRIMIN HAJRI, CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AL-AHMAR (AND OF COURSE NU'MAN HIMSELF) AS WELL AS AL-AYNI'S OWN STIFF TERMS. PRESIDENT'S PRESENT TACK IS TO SEEK AN ENLARGEMENT OF REPUBLICAN COUNCIL TO FIVE TO INCLUDE HIMSELF, PRIMIN HAJRI, AHMAD MUHAMMAD NU'MAN, AL-AYNI, AND PRESENT OTHER DEPUTY PRIMIN, DR. HASSAN MAKKI. SINCE THIS WOULD ADD TWO "PROGRESSIVES", AL-AYNI AND

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MAKKI, TO COMPLEMENT HAJRI ON THE RIGHT, AND PRESIDENT

AND AHMAD NU'MAN IN THE CENTER, PRESIDENT BELIEVES HE WOULD BE OBTAINING A MORE SATISFACTORY POLITICAL BALANCE THAN HE NOW HAS.

4. NU'MAN DID NOT THINK AL-AYNI WOULD ACCEPT THIS DEAL FOR HIS RETURN. HE HAD AFTER ALL DEMANDED ABOLITION OF REPUBLICAN COUNCIL AS WELL AS DISSOLUTION OF COUNSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY AS A CONDITION FOR HIS RETURN. FURTHERMORE, NOVEMBER 20 ELECTION OF AHMAD MUHAMMAD NU'MAN AS THIRD MEMBER OF REPUBLICAN COUNCIL (BELOW) HAD BEEN PUSHED THROUGH ASSEMBLY SEPARATELY AND BEFORE CONSIDERATION OF REPUBLICAN COUNCIL'S EXPANSION. THIS HAD BEEN ORCHESTRATED DELIBERATELY (BY FONMIN NU'MAN AND OTHER ENEMIES OF AL-AYNI) TO DECREASE LIKELIHOOD OF AL-AYNI'S ACCEPTING PROPOSAL FOR RETURN BY MAKING IT CLEAR THAT ASSEMBLY CONSIDERED THIS AND BY IMPLICATION HIS RETURN, A MATTER OF LOWER PRIORITY.

5. COMMENTING ON ASSEMBLY'S NOVEMBER 20 VOTE APPOINTING NU'MAN XSR. TO REPUBLICAN COUNCIL AS REPLACEMENT FOR ASSASSINATED MUHAMMAD ALI 'UTHMAN, NU'MAN JR. SAID ASSEMBLY ACTION HAD BEEN STRONGLY ENCOURAGED BY PRESIDENT IRYANI AND HAD RECEIVED SUPPORT EVEN FROM PRIMIN HAJRI DESPITE LATTER'S HOSTILITY TOWARD NU'MAN CLAN. ASSEMBLY VOTE WAS IN RECOGNITION OF (A) AHMAD NU'MAN'S LEADING ROLE OVER 30 YEAR SPAN IN WORKING FOR CREATION OF A REPUBLIC IN YEMEN AND (B) ESSENTIALITY OF HAVING SENIOR SHAFAT REPRESENTATION AT HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT. IT WAS ALSO A VINDICATION FOR A MAN WHO TWICE BEFORE HAD SEEN HIS NOMINATION TO REPUBLICAN COUNCIL VOTED DOWN BY ASSEMBLY. NOVEMBER 20 VOTE WAS 88 MEMBERS IN FAVOR, 6 OPPOSING AND 16 ABSTAINING. 39 MEMBERS HAD BEEN ABSENT BUT THESE, ACCORDING TO NU'MAN, WERE LARGELY HABITUAL ABSENTEES FROM TRIBAL AREAS. THE 6 OPPOSITION VOTES WERE FROM SUPPORTERS OF FORMER PRIMIN GEN. HASSAN AL-AMRI; ABSTENTIONS WERE AL-AYNI GROUP. ASSEMBLY AGREED TO TAKE UP AT LATER SESSION QUESTION OF EXPANDING REPUBLICAN COUNCIL TO FIVE.

6. ON CABINET MATTERS, NU'MAN SAID CAUSE OF INTERIOR CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTER AKWA'S REMOVAL TWO MONTHS AGO (HE IS STILL TECHNICALLY MINISTER BUT COMPLETELY NON-FUNCTIONING) HAD BEEN HIS INABILITY GET ALONG WITH MILITARY LEADERS. ALTHOUGH A MILITARY MAN HIMSELF, AKWA TENDED TREAT SENIOR COMMANDERS AS SUBORDINATE OFFICERS THUS IRRITATING THEM TO THE POINT WHERE THEY JOINED IN DEMANDING HIS REMOVAL. NU'MAN SAID NO NEW APPOINTMENT WOULD BE MADE UNTIL EVERYONE RETURNED FROM ALGIERS.

NU'MAN CONFIRMED REPORT OF TAIZ EMBOFF THAT EDUCATION MINISTER AFIF IS ON THE SKIDS WITH PRESIDENT IRYANI AFTER HAVING PERSONALLY SUBSIDIZED A STUDENT DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE IN TAIZ IN EFFORT BOLSTER HIS POSITION WHICH HAS STEADILY DETERIORATED AS A RESULT OF LACK OF COMPETENCE AND PENCHANT FOR SUBVERSIVE CONSPIRATORIAL ACTIVITY WITH OTHER UNSTABLE LEFT WING ELEMENTS.

7. NU'MAN SAID HE HIMSELF WOULD PROBABLY BE STAYING ON AS FONMIN DESPITE SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH PRIMIN HAJRI, EVEN IN DOUBTFUL EVENT AL-AYNI RETURNED.

8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH HE DISINGENOUSLY STATES HE WOULD WELCOME AL-AYNI'S RETURN AND RECENTLY ENCOURAGED HUM COME BACK TO YEMEN AS PRIVATE CITIZEN IF NOTHING ELSE IN ORDER KNOW HIS COUNTRY BETTER (AL-AYNI HAS BEEN ABSENT MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE EXCEPT FOR RELATIVELY BRIEF PERIOD 1970-72 IN HIGH OFFICE), THIS WOULD BE A BITTER PILL FOR NU'MAN WHO ENGINEERED FORMER PRIMIN'S REMOVAL IN DECEMBER 1972. ONLY INTENSE LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT WOULD PERSUADE HIM WORK IN SAME GOVERNMENT WITH A MAN REGARDED BY HIM AND MANY OTHERS INCLUDING THIS EMBASSY AS AN OPPORTUNISTIC, UNPRODUCTIVE, LEFT-WING POLITICAL PROPAGANDIST WHO AVOIDS HARD DECISION IN

INTEREST OF PERSONAL SURVIVAL IN OFFICE.
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